UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1999/106
12 July 1999

Original: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1999
Geneva, 5-30 July 1999
Agenda item 14 (h)
Social and human rights questions:
human rights

Letter dated 6 July 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council at the substantive session of 1999

I have the honour to transmit enclosed herewith the statement of the Government of the Republic of Serbia concerning the joint statement which was, under the auspices of the United Nations and the International Security Force in Kosovo, signed on 2 July 1999 in Pristina by the so-called representatives of the Serb people, bishop of Pristina Artemije and Momcilo Trajkovic with Hashim Taci. I would like to ask you to have it published as a document of the substantive session of 1999 of the Economic and Social Council under agenda item 14 (h).

(Signed) Branko BRANKOVIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

GE.99-63862 (E)

Annex

STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The Government of the Republic of Serbia was informed today of the joint statement which was, under the auspices of the United Nations and the International Security Force in Kosovo (KFOR) representatives, signed on 2 July 1999 in Pristina, by the bishop of Pristina Artemije and Momcilo Trajkovic with Hashim Taci.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia expresses utmost indignation and condemns the attempts at manipulating the sentiments and the name of Serb people in Kosovo and Metohija by the United Nations representatives who orchestrated a meeting of the alleged "representatives of the Serb people" with the Albanian representatives. The reason for such indignation, which triggered fierce reaction among a great number of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo and Metohija, are the following:

1. The alleged representatives of the Serb people (bishop Artemije and Momcilo Trajkovic) represent only themselves. The Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija and other peoples elect their representatives. They have not delegated this right to United Nations representatives. A United Nations representative has no right to designate which of the Serbs from Kosovo will represent the Serb interests.

2. The contents of the signed "document", which allegedly should be devoted to reconciliation and tolerance, which for the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Serb people has always been a noble goal - has been grossly abused.

Before the eyes of the entire world, it is sought to portray that the alleged Serb representatives approve of, or to say the least, absolve the crimes of the terrorist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the crimes of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Both of them - the crimes of Albanian terrorists and the crimes of NATO, according to the signed "declaration" have been absolved both by United Nations representatives and by the so-called Serb representatives. Together, they go even further. They accuse the legitimate Yugoslav authorities of crimes for their legitimate resistance to terrorism of the Albanian separatist movement and the criminal aggression of NATO.

The Government points out that in 11 weeks, in which the "parties signatories" condemn the "crimes" of the regime - which have not been established by anyone nor can be established on the basis of accurate facts and truth - that in 11 weeks, 21,700 tons of NATO bombs have been dropped on Yugoslavia and that as the first bombs fell, the leadership of the Albanian separatist movement over Radio Tirana called upon its terrorist gangs to engage in killing across Kosovo and Metohija, which caused unforeseeable consequences in this territory. There is relevant material evidence to this effect as well as on NATO crimes and the crimes of terrorist gangs called KLA, which the authors of the "declaration" do not have.

There is an obvious intent on the part of the perpetrators of genocide against the Serb people to have someone on behalf of the Serb people absolve and annihilate the crimes of the KLA terrorists and NATO aggressor in the eyes of the world public and erase the countless victims and suffering of the Serb people and other peoples in Kosovo and Metohija, which unfortunately, even before the very eyes of the United Nations and KFOR representatives still take place, and to portray the defenders of the homeland as criminals. This is a historical disgrace, a repeated killing of the dead which deserves to be condemned in strongest terms by all citizens of Serbia and the entire world public.

There is a danger that such an act by United Nations representatives who staged this meeting erode in addition to legal also all moral principles upon which the United Nations rest. By such activity of the highest United Nations representatives, the crime is termed as law and the law is termed as a crime. The crimes are absolved, and the legitimate right of a State to self-defence is termed as a crime.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia wishes to draw the attention of the entire international public to this shameful attempt at deceit and to express indignation, which the United Nations representatives, who have been deployed in Kosovo and Metohija on the basis of a Security Council resolution, instead of implementing the resolution, and above all, guaranteeing the security of all in Kosovo and Metojiha - put themselves in the service of hushing up the crimes of NATO aggression against a sovereign country and hushing up the ruthless crimes of terrorists, unrecorded in history.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia deeply believes that by the continuation of a political process which is forward-looking and life in tolerance and democracy in Kosovo and Metohija, a lasting peace can be achieved and considers that political talks among legitimate, not just any representatives of all national communities, should start immediately.